



Entertainment — The Arts

In Philly galleries now: A print show by the 'Bling' sculptor, and serious color at Locks

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(COURTESY MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY)

Martin Puryear's "Bull" (1962), woodcut on Japanese paper, printed by the artist. On exhibit at the Print Center.



by **Edith Newhall**, For The Inquirer

Martin Puryear's regal, monumental sculpture, *Big Bling*, which will preside over its grassy spot along Kelly Drive through November, isn't the only Puryear in town. There is also, of course, Puryear's permanently installed *Pavilion in the Trees* near the Horticulture Center in West Fairmount Park. And now the artistic process behind the sculptor's large outdoor works can also be discovered in the heart of Center City.

"Martin Puryear: Prints, 1962-2016," which opened Wednesday at the Print Center, was developed to complement *Big Bling*'s presence in Philadelphia. It was organized by Ruth Fine, a Puryear scholar and independent curator conveniently based here.

In her essay for her exhibition, Fine reminds viewers that, while he was in college (at the Catholic University of America in Washington), Puryear majored in painting, began making woodcut prints, and hoped to become a nature illustrator.

After a stint in the Peace Corps, he studied printmaking at the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts while making sculpture independently at night. He continued to draw and make prints while pursuing a master of fine arts degree in sculpture at Yale.

With loans of prints from the Matthew Marks Gallery, Paulson Fontaine Press, Dolan/Maxwell Gallery, and Universal Limited Art Editions — and with both floors of the Print Center at her command — Fine has filled in the trajectory of Puryear's efforts in printmaking. Starting with such early works as *Bull*, a woodcut print he made in 1962, she draws attention to his interest in the interplay of positive and negative shapes, in strong contrasts of light and dark, and in the process of woodcut printing, as seen in the grain of the wood revealed within the massive animal's contours.

Woodcuts Puryear made in 1999 to accompany the text of Jean Toomer's *Cane* — first published in 1923 and then in 2000 as a leather-bound art book with the woodcuts — show images inspired by Toomer's seven female characters. Against predominantly black backgrounds, delicate uninked lines form various shapes from nature, outlines of female faces, and other recognizable archetypes in whimsical compositions reminiscent of Miró.

Fine's presentation of three working proofs for the etching *Black Cart* (2008), all printed by Pam Paulson of Paulson Bott Press, offers the opportunity to see Puryear develop an image and reveal his adjustments in progression.

The form that will eventually achieve monumental three-dimensionality as *Big Bling* is but a modest etching here, *Untitled VI (State 1)*, from 2012. It doesn't feature that attention-getting gold-leaf shackle, but the bones of the sculpture are firmly in place.

Through Nov. 18 at the Print Center, 1614 Latimer St., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Information: 215-735-6090 or www.printcenter.org.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/entertainment/arts/in-philly-galleries-now-a-print-show-by-the-bling-sculptor-and-serious-color-at-locks-20170920.html> found 9.21.2017